

Sheep growers aim to dispel lamb's baaad rap

By Ann Whiting Allen 8-28-90
Deseret News food editor

Deanna Wankier understands what it means to fight an uphill battle.

She and her husband, Farrell, are in the sheep business, gambling with their family income in a roller coaster marketplace.

Part of the difficulty comes from misunderstanding.

"If people really knew how to cook lamb, and insisted on American-processed lamb, we'd have a very dependable business. We have to teach people how to use lamb; how to prepare it in a variety of healthy ways," Wankier explained.

The sheepman's wife elected to publicize the benefits of lamb in conjunction with the recent 75th National Ram Sale held at the Salt Palace.

Livestock from as many as 30 states was exhibited and sold at the gathering.

"Growers in the Mountainwest are continually trying to improve the genetic inheritance of their herds," said Farrell Wankier. "More than 10 breeds and crossbreeds are represented in the sale. Many of the Utah growers deal in black-faced lambs, which produce quality meat."

Quality Utah lamb was the attention-getting main dish prepared by the Wankiers and served on the "Utah Day," at Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

"Wes Tanner of the Utah Air National Guard invited us to present lamb at a national officers dinner at the base. There were other Utah products, Cache Valley cheese, honey and Mrs. Fields cookies, but the marinated lamb was the main course," Deanna added.

Utah growers agree the main problem with public consumption of lamb is a misunderstanding.

"Many people have eaten imported lamb," explained Janice Chournos, "International



PHOTOGRAPHY/ GARRY BRYANT

Roger Peart, Janice Chournos, Sam Chournos, Deanna Wankier, Verl Anderson and Ivy Peart aren't the least bit sheepish about promoting lamb.

in such items as fajitas.

While the prices are unstable in the ram market, Utah sheep folks

guarantee stability in the quality of edible lamb.

Try a new direction with a leg of

lamb with the adventurous recipes Utah growers shared with our readers.

Lamb Barbeque

Leg of lamb

Roast leg of lamb at 325 for 2-3 hours, depending on size; cool.

Saute onions with butter until transparent, then add remaining ingredients. Simmer until thickened; add thin-sliced lamb. Cover and bake at 325 for 30 minutes or until flavors blend. Serves 8-10 as a main dish or a sandwich filling.

6 tablespoons butter

2/3 cup onions, chopped

2 cups ketchup

1 cup water

2/3 cup fresh lemon juice

2/3 cup vinegar

4 tablespoons brown sugar or to taste

1 teaspoon garlic salt

Greek-Fried Lamb

specifications require different processing techniques, which result in a different flavor and texture. We encourage people to ask for American processed lamb and they'll be able to see a surprising difference."

Lamb can be used in many beef recipes or as a substitute for chicken

1½ cups olive oil
¾ cup fresh lemon juice
3 cloves garlic, minced
1½ teaspoons oregano
Salt and pepper to taste

carefully. Combine marinade ingredients with lamb; allow to marinate overnight or 24 hours. Deep fry in peanut oil using a wire basket or stir fry in a skillet or wok. Serves 8-10.

Ervin Dell Ford

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In our opinion

Richard B. Laney, editorial page editor, 237-2186

Congress must pay debt owed to sheep ranchers

Although Congress finally agreed this autumn to compensate Utah cancer victims exposed to open-air nuclear fallout in the 1950s and early 1960s, the sheep ranchers who lost their flocks to intense radiation from the same tests are still waiting to be recognized.

In the aftermath of five nuclear tests over a two-month period, the sheep ranchers saw their animals start to die of obvious radiation poisoning. The losses were heavy and some families were driven to the edge of bankruptcy. These were small ranchers. Some never fully recovered financially.

It ought to have been easy for the federal government to make up for the damage at the time. Losses totaled more than \$200,000, a relatively much larger sum in the early 1950s than today, but still a minor cost for government, even back in those days.

Yet this is not just a matter of federal recalcitrance in paying for damages it caused. The issue involved deceit, cover-ups, lies and an absolute refusal to admit responsibility in the face of overwhelming evidence.

The feeling by federal officials at the time apparently was that to admit any danger from the open-air atomic testing would jeopardize continuation of the tests and thus affect national security. So the decision was made to jeopardize the downwind citizens and their livestock instead.

When the sheep ranchers filed a lawsuit in 1956, federal officials said there was no evidence of radiation-caused deaths and the judge ruled in favor of the government. More than

25 years later, the same judge listened again to arguments and declared that the government had committed fraud upon the court in that first case — lied and hid evidence, in other words.

Unfortunately, an appeals court later threw out the case on the grounds that the federal government cannot be sued for actions involving national security. The judges said to obtain redress from Congress.

But Congress has not been anxious to act.

In the case of human victims, one argument made for years was that there was no way to tell if a particular cancer victim was stricken because of nuclear fallout or whether that person developed cancer independently. Finally, it was decided that such distinctions could not be made and all victims of certain cancers in the fallout area should be compensated.

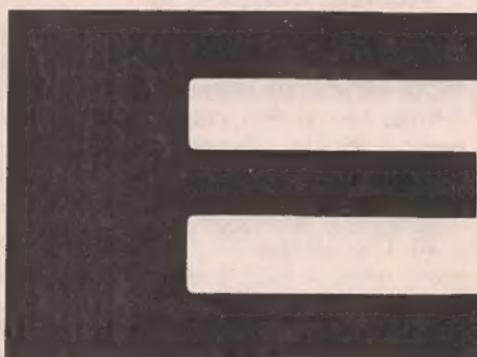
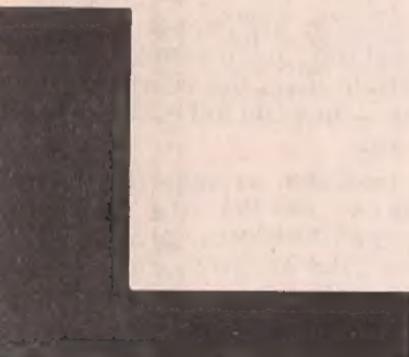
That was never an issue with the sheep. The animals began dying of radiation burns within a short time after being exposed in a particularly hot and heavy fallout area.

Despite this clear-cut distinction, a proposal to pay sheep ranchers for their long-ago losses was dropped from the compensation bill passed by Congress and signed by President Bush. The reason? Just a feeling in Congress that they didn't want to get involved in the sheep deaths. That is not acceptable.

When a new Congress reconvenes next year, the long-delayed justice toward sheep ranchers victimized by their own government ought to be recognized and paid for.

M.-10 P.M.

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